St. John's Regional Fire Department
Policy and Operational Guidelines

Title: 02-02-14	Mechanical Division Working Alone Policy
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Index:	02 Employee Resources
Section:	02 Health and Safety
Title:	14 Mechanical Division Working Alone Policy

Purpose

To establish procedures for Mechanical Division staff who are required to work alone.

Background

Mechanical Division staff may be required to work independently in the mechanical facility (garage) or off-site while completing maintenance, repairs, inspections, or related operational duties. These working alone situations may involve exposure to equipment, vehicles, tools, chemicals, noise, and other garage-related hazards. This POG has been developed to provide guidance and establish procedures that support employee safety while working alone in the garage or off-site.

This is a new POG.

Procedure

Guidelines:

- The following can be considered as working alone situations:
  - Repairing/maintaining equipment in the garage alone.
  - Repairing equipment off site.
- Complete a hazard assessment prior to attending any of the above working alone situations. The hazard assessment may determine that two employees are required to perform the task. Prohibited tasks (identified below) are not to be completed when working alone.

- Working alone contact person: **Manager – Mechanical Services or designate.** Names and numbers of designate if applicable to be provided to employees prior to start of working alone situation.
- The frequency of contact between the employee and the working alone contact.
  A. Maximum time between contacts is **one hour**.
  B. Employee will contact **Manager – Mechanical Services or Designate** on arrival and completion of task.
- Contact will be via text on cell phone. Employee will be responsible for checking in with **Manager – Mechanical Services or Designate** at the predetermined intervals when they are working alone.
- Ensure that the cell phone is charged and functioning.
- If the employee fails to make contact within the allotted timeframe, the **Manager – Mechanical Services or Designate** shall try to contact the employee.
- If the employee cannot be contacted, the **Manager – Mechanical Services or Designate** shall then go to the last known location of the employee.
- If the work is being performed at a fire station or near one, the employee shall notify the captain of that station and inform them that they are onsite and working alone.
- If working alone at Mechanical Garage – Kents Pond, ensure the door between the station and the garage is unlocked and propped open for easy access.
- The **Manager – Mechanical Services or Designate** shall maintain a list of potential working alone situations. Review accordingly.
- Working alone procedures must be reviewed and communicated to all affected employees.

Working Alone Prohibited Tasks

- Employees are not to work alone in the pit if either of the two staircases at each end are blocked by the apparatus they are working on.
- Employees are not to work alone at a height above 3m/10ft. The hose beds on the trucks are within allowable heights; the top of the ladder trucks is above that height.
- Employees are not to work alone in an area that is exposed to traffic, only vehicles that are parked safely away from traffic can be serviced when the employee is alone.
- Employees are not to reverse a truck into or out of the shop without a spotter, they must have a Firefighter to assist and spot them.
- Employees are not to drive onto or off the pit without a spotter, they must have a Firefighter to assist and spot them.

Parking Lot Safety:

Employees are encouraged to:

- Park near the building in a highly visible and well-lit area.
- Park nears the stairs or a well-lit exit in an underground lot.
- Use the main building entrance - avoid rear or secluded exits.
- Lock doors and roll up windows once in the vehicle.
- Have a plan. Know where to go for safety and how to call for help.
- Try to walk with a coworker or security.
    - Give them a ride back to the building afterwards.

- Be aware of your surroundings and trust your instincts.
- Do not:
    - Dig in a purse or bag.
    - Wear headphones or be distracted by cellphones.
    - Carry heavy briefcases or bags that may get in the way.

If employees must walk alone:
- Have a co-worker watch from a window.
- Wave to a window even if no one is watching…it gives the illusion that someone is there.
- Stay on well-lit streets and in the center of the sidewalk.
    - Stay away from hiding spots such as bushes, doorways, alleys, and parked cars.
    - Cross the road, if necessary.

Have ready:
- Keys to unlock the vehicle.
- Keys or cardkey to unlock building doors.
- A whistle or other personal alarm.

When approaching the car, look around, inside, and even glance underneath for people who may be present. If you are suspicious, walk away and go to a safe place and call for help.

Working Late/Off Hours:
If working late or during off hours, take the following precautions:
- Alert a supervisor if working late and when you expect to leave.
- Park the car in a well-lit area close to the building before dark.
- Have a check-in procedure in place.
- Attempt to work late on the same night as a colleague.
- Leave quietly if you suspect that someone might be inside…go to a safe area with a lockable door and call for help.
- Make a comment like "my supervisor will be right here and will be able to help you" if you encounter someone unfamiliar…this should indicate that you are not alone.
- Call the police or security officers if you suspect someone is lurking outside.

<u>Post Incident (If one occurs):</u>
If an incident occurs during a working alone situation:
- Employees shall complete an Incident Investigation Report form and submit to their supervisor.
- Employees are reminded that if needed the City of St. John's and St. John's Regional Fire Department can provide assistance through the Employee and Family Assistance Program.

NOTE
All Operational Guidelines are provided as a guideline only and may be altered by the OIC to meet extenuating circumstances.

Approvals
Fire Chief/Director

Responsibility
St. John's Regional Fire Department

POG #02-02-14
Approved by:

Sherry L. Colford
Fire Chief
Director of Regional Fire and Emergency Services

Sept 24, 2026
Date

Appendix/Appendices
None